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REPORT TO USCIB
BY THE
USCIB AD HOC COMMITTEE
ON THE
PROBLEM OF ALERTING THE HIGHEST AUTHORITIES

THE PROBLEM

1. To study and make recommendations for perfecting the means of transmitting critical intelligence, particularly that related to prior warning of Soviet attack, to the highest authorities to provide an available speed of service approaching ten minutes.

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

2. On 14 May 1957, the Intelligence Advisory Committee (IAC) approved the proposed Terms of Reference of a Warning Systems Survey Committee (WSSC).* The mission of this committee is to determine how fully and promptly present and potential intelligence collection methods, sources and transmission channels can provide information which may be essential for advance warning of Sino-Soviet Bloc hostile action.

3. On 9 August 1957, the United States Communications Intelligence Board (USCIB) agreed to have the COMINT aspects of the warning systems survey conducted by the WSSC.**

4. On 30 October 1957, revised Terms of Reference for the WSSC were forwarded to members of USCIB for information.***

* IAC-M-289, 14 May 1957, Item 3

** USCIB: 9.2/53, 9 August 1957

*** USCIB: 9.2/55, 30 October 1957

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5. On 24 October 1957, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) informed the members of USCIB that representatives of the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities had been studying the availability of communications for early warning and intelligence purposes in times of crisis. From a sampling of "emergency" and "operational immediate" messages during the period between 25 June and 24 July (random 30 day selection), it was readily apparent that delays in transmission or lack of communications facilities could create a dangerous situation in times of international crisis. It was recommended that the Department of Defense be urged to take all necessary steps to insure the constant availability of communications channels and the expeditious dissemination of high priority messages at all times.*

6. At the 144th meeting of USCIB, held on 8 November 1957, the Board discussed a CIA proposed memorandum to the Secretary of Defense urging that all necessary steps be taken to insure adequate communications facilities to disseminate critical intelligence.** The USCIB agreed to form an ad hoc committee to study and make recommendations to USCIB on the problem of alerting the highest authorities.

7. It has been recommended by the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities that:

"As a matter of highest priority, the total resources of the Intelligence Community, under the personal direction of the Director of Central Intelligence, be concentrated on the perfection of the communicating and processing of intelligence information

* Enclosure to USCIB: 9.2/54, 25 October 1957

** USCIB: 9.2/57, 8 November 1957

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